

Summer 2004

## Ballast Quarterly Review, v19n4, Summer 2004

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## PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

American Canvas II by Mary Snyder Behrens (©2002)



Look for points in common  
that are not points of similarity.

It is by this means  
that a poet can say,  
"A swallow stabs the sky"  
and thereby turn  
the swallow into a dagger.

GEORGES BRAQUE

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BERNARD  
 WOLFE  
*(Memoirs of a  
 Not Altogether Shy  
 Pornographer)*

PARADOX: the more  
 you comb through  
 your insides the less  
 you come up with to  
 write about. Besides,  
 there's more to look  
 at out there than in  
 here, and it's less  
 fogged over. You've  
 go to learn more  
 from three billion  
 people than from  
 one, it's a matter of  
 arithmetic. Again,  
 it's the writers who  
 keep their eyes on  
 the world who tell  
 us the most about  
 themselves. What's a  
 man after all but his  
 vision? Blinders and  
 all? What's he going  
 to convey to us  
 about his vision if  
 he keeps it trained  
 on his own insides,  
 which he'll never  
 see? But I suppose  
 every writer has to  
 do this me-myself-  
 and-I softshoe one  
 time out, to show  
 how versatile he is  
 and that he hasn't  
 got two left feet.

MARK  
 VAN DOREN  
 Nothing in nature is  
 more beautiful than  
 the eye of a horse.

*Ballast* is an acronym for Books Art Language  
 Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well  
 as a distant allusion to *Blast*, the short-lived  
 publication founded during World War I by  
 Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer.  
*Ballast* is mainly a pastiche of astonishing  
 passages from books, magazines, diaries and  
 other writings. Put differently, it is a journal  
 devoted to wit, the contents of which are  
 intended to be insightful, amusing or thought  
 provoking.

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GINU KAMANI  
*(Becoming American: Personal Essays by  
 First Generation Immigrant Women)*  
 Indian lore is full of the magical power of the  
 eyes—justified, in my view, as Indian eyes are  
 truly incomparable. The cultural emphasis on  
 implicit rather than explicit communication,  
 on keeping emotions in check, on placing  
 others before self, and observing duty-bound  
 restrictions on words and action, transforms  
 ocular communication into a high art. In the  
 Vedas, the visual gaze is considered as potent  
 as the transmission of semen between bodies.  
 Westerners are often entranced by the eyes of  
 Indian gurus and holy men, whose gaze casts  
 an enticing spell. Many have felt hypnotized,  
 submitting to a power they cannot fathom.

ANON  
 Bad spellers of the world, untie!



#### FOUR STORIES ABOUT GROWING UP IN MINNEAPOLIS IN THE 1940'S

by Keith Gunderson

WE AT BALLAST feel very fortunate to have discovered recently an anthology titled *Growing Up in Minnesota: Ten Writers Remember Their Childhoods*. Chester Anderson, ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976). The recollections in the book were written by a variety of people who differ in ethnicity, gender and age. While all were genuinely interesting, we were especially taken by a wonderfully nostalgic work titled "A Portrait of My State As a Dogless Young Boy's Apartment," written by Keith Gunderson (b. 1935), a poet and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota. His philosophical publications include *Mentality and Machines*, and *Language, Mind and Knowledge*. In 1974-75, he received a Creative Writing Fellowship for Poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts. In this issue of BALLAST, with the author's permission, we are reprinting four of his memoir-like "prose poems."—RRB

#### 1 / Grape Flavored Ice Cream Sodas

ONCE WHEN my Dad and me were coming back from crappie fishing in Lake Calhoun without any crappies we stopped at SNYDER'S DRUGS for a treat and the treat I got was a grape flavored ice cream soda and it was really good and even so good I asked my Dad to taste it a little and he did and then snuck another taste and said it was really good and the next time we came back from crappie fishing in Lake Calhoun without any

P. G.  
WODEHOUSE  
(*Uncle Dynamite*)  
"My dear wife...is taking a trip to the West Indies."  
"Jamaica?"  
"No, she went on her own free will."

BILLIE  
HOLIDAY  
They think they can make fuel from horse manure. . . .  
Now, I don't know if your car will be able to get 30 miles to the gallon, but it's sure gonna put a stop to siphoning.

JAMES AGATE  
The Atlantic Ocean is the only really convenient way of disposing of old razor blades.

CHARLES  
NEIDER  
The Arctic and Antarctica are poles apart.

J. W.  
MURRAY  
Bavarians say that the difference between a rich farmer and a poor farmer is that the poor farmer cleans his Mercedes himself.



# JOHN C. THIRLWALL

*(John Dewey: Recollections)*

In 1932 I was an English graduate student at Columbia [University]. Ashley Thorndike was then Chairman of the English Department, and every graduate student took his Shakespeare course, which [began] at 2:00 pm in a lecture room holding over one hundred [students], on the sixth floor of Philosophy Hall. One day, promptly at 2:00 pm, Professor [John] Dewey shambled in, sat down at the desk and proceeded to read a long list, marking absent each one, since there was no reply from a crowded room. At 2:10 [Professor] Thorndike strode into the room, gawped at Dewey for a moment, then tapped him on the shoulder, saying: "John, you are one flight up." None of us laughed as Thorndike proceeded to read the proof sheets of his Shakespearean Comedy.

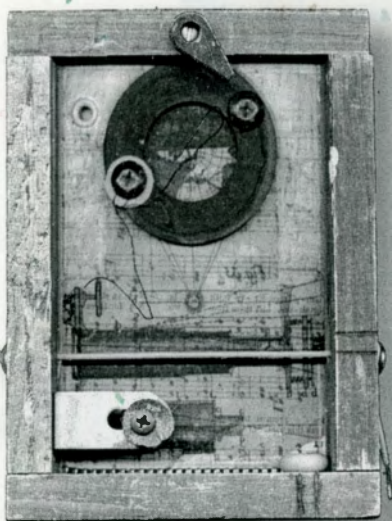
# THOMAS EDISON

*(Golden Book)*

The English are not an inventive people; they don't eat enough pie.

crappies and stopped at SNYDER'S for a treat we both got grape flavored ice cream sodas and told each other how really really good they were and a few weeks later when it was hot and everyone was sitting around the apartment melting my Dad asked me if I felt like having one of those grape flavored ice cream sodas and I said I did feel like that and thought that him and me would be walking up to SNYDER'S without Janice but instead my Dad had decided to make grape flavored ice cream sodas all by himself for the whole family and said if you think those up at SNYDER'S are good wait'll you taste mine I could show that soda jerk a thing or two your old man almost went into the restaurant business you know and I knew he sort of almost had because he loved to say he almost had but I was surprised about the grape flavored ice cream sodas because I'd never seen him make one or even heard him talk about them before I'd had one at SNYDER'S but he said he made great ones and if I'd get my nose out of my comic and run down to the basement store and charge twelve bottles of grape pop and a quart and a half of vanilla ice cream we'd all have as much as we wanted and my Mom asked my Dad about just how much he thought we wanted but he didn't even hear her and I yelled I wanted three or four giant sodas and Janice said she wanted a root beer float instead because she didn't like grape but my Dad said no root beer float could hold a candle to his grape flavored ice cream sodas so I ran down to the store and got six bottles of grape and the ice cream and then I ran down again and got six more and when I got back upstairs I saw my Dad had already poured the first bottles in the Thanksgiving Turkey Roasting Pan and had begun to stab apart all the ice cream with a knife and smash at it with a big wooden spoon and then he poured in the rest of the pop and began to stir the ice cream around and around until everything began to look purply white and kept smashing away at any ice cream lumps he'd spot bobbing around in the pop and none of them escaped and pretty soon it all looked kind of soapy and you didn't see what you'd see if you looked in your soda at SNYDER'S and my Mom asked my Dad if he was sure he knew what he was doing but he said she had to be kidding and kept stirring and stirring and then said ALL RIGHT GET DOWN THE GLASSES and poured the funny looking stuff into the glasses and gurgled his own down in a couple of gulps and announced THAT'S BETTER THAN SNYDER'S YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS ON THAT and my Mom took a little sip of hers and said she'd never had one of

American Canvas 024 by Mary Snyder Behrens (©2002)



them before and it certainly was different and I tasted mine and yelled IT'S TOO WARM AND THERE AREN'T ANY HUNKS OF ICE CREAM LEFT and my Dad said that's the secret of my recipe it's much smoother than any soda you can buy in a drugstore so I almost began to cry but remembered I had my own nickel and ran down to the store and bought a vanilla ice cream cone and plopped the scoop into my soda and Janice said she thought it looked icky and didn't want any but my Dad kept on drinking the stuff until he said we could save the rest for later and it'd keep and if we wanted it colder he'd make it colder and turned the refrigerator way up and yanked out a lot of jars and plates of stuff so he could get the rest of his secret recipe in but he had to pour it into three small bowls because the pan wouldn't fit and my Mom made popcorn and we all went into the living room to listen to THE SHADOW on the radio while my Dad's secret recipe sat in the bowls and the next morning me and Janice went to look at the bowls and there was just a lot of scummy stuff on the top of each one and purply white pop underneath so we laughed and laughed because Dad had already gone to work and I asked my Mom if she'd like some purple swamp for breakfast and in the afternoon I caught my Mom pouring the three swamps down the sink and when she saw me see her she said I don't think Dad will miss this very much and when Dad came home and looked in the refrigerator he said I see you've finished it off after all and my Mom said we sure did Dad we sure did. ■

[GEORGE BERNARD SHAW] was a music critic in the 1890s and he had been invited to a soirée in the house of a noted hostess. She had a new violinist to entertain her hundreds of guests and when the show was over she asked Shaw what he thought of her protégé. He said that the violinist reminded him of Paderewski. "But," said the lady, "Paderewski is not a violinist." To which Shaw replied, "Exactly."

WILLIAM  
MAXWELL  
"Printing for  
Bernard Shaw" in  
*The Listener*  
(November 10, 1949).

ART  
BUCHWALD  
(*More Caviar*)  
Brno is a vry nce cty,  
but we ddn't get a  
chance to spnd mch  
tme thre... Thre are  
mny twns in Czecho-  
slovakia without  
vwels, but Brno is  
the lrgest one of  
thm all.



TIM

GARTON ASH

The inhabitants of Bohemia are the least Bohemian people I have met.

[AMERICAN

PHILOSOPHER John]

Dewey's observations on art were sometimes characterized by a remarkable spontaneous insight. On one of his frequent visits to The Barnes Foundation while Dr. [Albert C.] Barnes and I were looking at the collection with him, he stopped in front of a [painting by Paul] Cézanne, *The Bibe-mus Quarry*, and said with the air of tossing off an incidental remark, "If you were to explode a bomb in the middle of this landscape you would have a [painting by Chaim] Soutine."

VIOLETTE DE MAZIA,

quoted in Robert Bruce Williams, ed., *John Dewey, Recollections* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1970), p. 9.

## 2 / I Love You Very Mush

WHEN I was only in 3rd grade and Jack was already in 4th Jack fell in love with Ann Bamby who was in 4th too and when he let me meet her I fell in love with her even though she was a grade ahead because me and Jack were alot alike and Ann Bamby had long brown hair and was cuter than Janice and almost as beautiful as my Mom and one night when Jack came over we felt like writing love letters to Ann Bamby and I decided that I would just write DEAR ANN and then I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH one hundred times and then I GUESS I'D BETTER SIGN OFF NOW and SINCERELY YOURS; LOVE, KEITH GUNDERSON so I did and counted right and stuck all the I LOVE YOU VERY MUCHes in an envelope and addressed it to Ann Bamby and got a stamp from my Mom and Jack stuck whatever he wrote in an envelope and got a stamp from my Mom and said his Mom would pay her back and we didn't ask each other what we'd said in our letters but walked down to 32nd and Lyndale and plopped them in the MAIL BOX but as soon as my letter was gone a terrible idea came into my head about how you spell MUCH because the way I'd spelled MUCH was M-U-S-H and it was beginning to seem a little bit wrong so as soon as I got back to Apt 24 I asked my Mom how you spelled MUCH and she said M-U-C-H so I asked how you spell MUSH like in corn meal mush and she said M-U-S-H so then I knew that the terrible idea was right and I'd told Ann Bamby I LOVE YOU VERY MUSH a hundred times and I could see her in my head opening my love letter and showing it to her whole family and everyone laughing and screaming and her big brother running next door and showing it around to the neighbors and Ann Bamby laughing too and telling everyone I was just a 3rd grade twerp and how Jack Hemken was her real boy friend and had sent her a letter no one else could ever see because it was so beautiful so I asked my Mom how you could get a letter back out of a MAIL BOX once you'd stuck it in and she said she didn't know how you could and my Dad who was reading the paper and eavesdropping too yelled out how it was illegal and a Federal Crime to break into a MAIL BOX so I knew it was all over because even Ann Bamby wasn't worth doing a Federal Crime for and that Jack and Ann would end up together and I'd end up the big joke of Ann Bamby's neighborhood and pretty soon the whole school would know about it but the next time I saw Ann Bamby she didn't say anything about the letter so I called her up and asked her to go to the movie with me at the Lyndale



and she said she would and though she was already in 4th grade I dared put my head in her lap and say I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH and I said it how I hadn't spelled it and afterwards she let me buy her a coke at Walgreen's Drug. ■

### 3 / Playing Worm

ONE NIGHT me and Jack and Margot and Renee were playing in the hall of 3142 Lyn-dale and I was sliding down the stairs from the 2nd floor to the 1st floor when Margot walked up the stairs which made me to see all the way up her dress to her very pants which were pink and I felt funny and nice all over and wanted to do it again not by accident but in a way so that if anyone looked at my looking it would look like an accident so I made up a new game I called WORM and I said I'M A WORM I'M A WORM HERE I COME HERE I COME and slid along the halls and up and down the stairs on my back and sometimes Margot or Renee would run by and I'd get a look but I couldn't go too fast on my back so if they ran too far I'd stand up and say NOW THE WORM CAN RUN NOW THE WORM CAN RUN and run until I caught up with them and flop myself down by their feet but once I went overboard and tried to wriggle between Margot's legs and she giggled and screamed and ran into her apartment so Renee giggled and screamed too and ran into Margot's apartment even though I didn't even try to make the worm go between her legs so that left just Jack and he asked me if I still wanted to be that dumb worm and that he didn't even know what the game WORM

AT THE dinner table one evening [in the 1920s at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, at the college president's home], our famous guest [Count Hermann Keyserling] suddenly asked all of us who in the American scene would make a distinct contribution to culture in the next fifty to one hundred years. A number of nominations were made. When it came my turn, I said "John Dewey." At that, the huge (rather tall than huge) Count said: "I met John Dewey last week at my lecture at Columbia University. Surely that 'little shrimp' couldn't add anything to human knowledge."...Later by several weeks, *Time* magazine had a short article on the Count's departure in which a reporter asked him what three things had the United States [contributed] to civilization. The Count replied: "Jazz, skyscrapers and John Dewey."

JJ. OPPENHEIMER, quoted in Robert Bruce Williams, ed., *John Dewey, Recollections* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1970), pp. 123-124.



GEORGE  
BERNARD  
SHAW

Feeding a man on books exclusively is like feeding a lap-dog on gin; both books and gin are products of distillation, and their effect on the organism is much the same.

LORD  
KINROSS

A European coming to America for the first time, should skip New York and fly direct to Kansas. Start from the Middle. The East will only mislead you.

TREVOR  
FISHLOCK

Minneapolis and St. Paul...are nicknamed the Twin Cities. They are divided by the Mississippi River, and united by the belief that the inhabitants of the other side of the river are inferior.

was and I said I didn't want to play WORM unless Margot and Renee came out because it was a game you only play with girls because they're afraid of them and run away when you're the worm and that once my Dad took Janice fishing and when he asked her to put a worm on her hook she screamed and I forgot to tell Jack that when my Dad asked me to put a worm on my hook I screamed too and even cried a little bit.

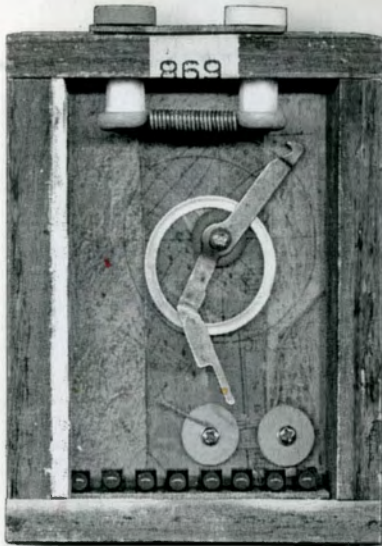
#### 4 / The Clean Plate Club

PART OF the USA's part of the Allied War Effort against the Krauts and the Japs which was what Jack said his Uncle Amil said you should call them was THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB and THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB was a club you could join if you cleaned your plate at meal times and didn't waste any food so you wouldn't be hungry so often and end up using too much food on the home front when our Boys in the trenches needed it to keep them going against the enemy but I never quite figured out THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB because I always thought of clubs as having just a few members and four or five members being the most any club could take and even the Cub Scouts of America wasn't a club because Pack 206 all by itself had almost a hundred kids in it but THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB was said on the radio to have millions and millions of Americans in it and when I got my card from the radio station saying I was a member of it I didn't know the names of anyone else of the millions and millions of Americans except for my Mom and Dad and Janice and Bob Hope and President Roosevelt so I asked Jack if he was a member of THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB and he said he was because his mom had sent his name in to the radio station which sent out the membership cards and though he didn't think it was much fun he was going to stick it out because his Uncle Amil was in the navy and had been at

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[NAPIER WILT, one of his teachers at the University Chicago] was an enormous whale of a creature, huge! He liked to wear a belt and suspenders, in the old style. He was completely bald; he looked like an egg... I'd go up to see him on some summer day, and he'd be stretched out in his office, with his huge stomach, and he'd have this little Modern Library book on the stomach. It looked like a small bird on a whale...

PAUL CARROLL in Molly McQuade, ed. *An Unsentimental Education: Writers and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 19-20.



Pearl Harbor so I thought I'd better stick it out too because my Uncle Earl was in the army and had seen action and I wanted him to get enough to eat but I was never sure when I was being a member of the club and when I wasn't because sometimes I'd eat Spam sandwiches in a chair and not even use a plate so there wasn't anything to be clean about except my hands and sometimes my plate would be pretty clean except for a few carrots and I couldn't see how anyone except yourself could really check up on you all the time to know if you were following the rules of the club or not and I didn't even know who the officers of the club were so I asked my Dad and he said he was the president but I just dared to laugh in his face it was such a lie even my Mom wouldn't believe it and even though I didn't want to be unpatriotic I felt sort of unpatriotic because I didn't like being in THE CLEAN PLATE CLUB because what good was a club if you couldn't get to be an officer or know when to kick someone out of it? ■

# HARRISON SALISBURY (*Growing Up in Minnesota*)

Once [after he had moved to New York], on top of the Woolworth Building (the Empire State Building did not yet exist), a man asked my mother what it was that lay beyond the Hudson. She said New Jersey. "Oh, yes," he said. "Well, I've never been west of the Hudson." How to explain Minnesota—not only west of the Hudson but west of the Mississippi? It was not easy. New Yorkers didn't seem to understand the difference between Minneapolis and Indianapolis. And even when I explained they didn't seem to think it really made a difference. I knew that New Yorkers were very sophisticated people. In fact, I was ashamed of coming from a place way out west where, as I understood the New York view, no one really lived and certainly no one from New York ever ventured.

WHAT WE need more of is slow art: art that holds time as a vase holds water; art that grows out of modes of perception and whose skill and doggedness make you think and feel; art that isn't merely sensational, that doesn't get its message across in ten seconds, that isn't falsely iconic, that hooks into something deep-running in our natures. In a word, art that is the very opposite of mass media.

ROBERT HUGHES in "A Bastion Against Cultural Obscenity" [a speech delivered at Burlington House, London] in *The Guardian* (3 June 2004).



HARRISON  
SALISBURY  
(*Growing Up  
in Minnesota*)

The first cartoon I can remember was the famous one in *Punch* in which the middle-aged Prince of Wales, Edward VII-to-be, stands beside a great window looking out at the London down-pour, saying, "My, what a long reign!"

WINIFRED NICHOLSON

[The Dutch painter Piet] Mondrian on the other side of the carriage was gazing wrapt onto the Somme country as we sped past it on our way to Calais. It was September 21, 1938. The grass was lush and green, the poplars green and soft, the sky was evening yellow, sunlight, a green peach lay over the marshy land. "How beautiful, how peaceful it is," I thought, "and you see Mondrian does not hate green or the country. His eyes are full of marvel.: "Isn't it wonderful," he murmured. "Yes, it is," I said.

"Look," he continued, "how they pass, they pass, they pass, cutting the horizon, here, and here, and here"... I realized that what delighted him were the telegraph poles—the vertical that cut the horizontal of the horizon.

[AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER John] Dewey was speaking slowly and very carefully [in an evening class in 1935 at Columbia University], also in simply constructed sentences, which was typical of his style. I was listening intently to a point. Many of the class seemed to have left the area of thought. Dewey himself seemed to have left, to have gone into his own world. I felt that I was with him regardless of the seeming absence of the other members of the class. He hesitated after his point was made, and he looked at me through his thick bifocals. I said to him in a too loud, nervous voice, "Doesn't emotion play a part in this thought process?" His stare fixed on me. I was embarrassed. He was silent—then he walked slowly over to the window and looked into the night, for the better part of two minutes. Then he looked back and fixed his stare at me (at least that is how I felt) and he said in a very slow and almost inaudible voice—but he knew I heard and he seemed to me not to care if anyone else heard or not—"Knowledge is a small cup of water floating on a sea of emotion."

EARL K. PECKHAM, quoted in Robert Bruce Williams, ed., *John Dewey, Recollections* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1970), p. 127.

ART MAKES order out of chaos, do they still teach that hogwash in the schools? It's liars who give order to chaos, then go around calling themselves artists and in this way gave art a bad name. Here high up on their cerebral peaks are all the artists sifting and sorting out the facts and pasting them together any old way to show how neat it all is and how they're at the controls of the whole works, and there under their feet the facts go on tumulting and pitching them on their asses over and over, and what's the whole demonstration worth? Don't tell me the real artists are tidiers. Celine is in the grand spatter business. Henry Miller spatters too, though a good part of the time by plan, by program, and that's his tension. Hemingway held it all in his tight hand and pretended it was one packed ball of wax till the end, then his true spewing self came out and he spattered all right, spattered all his order-making brains over the living room, and the lie of having it all together was done for, he arrived at the moment of going at his authenticity, his one moment of truth. When do you see Dostoevsky laying out his reality with a T-square?

BERNARD WOLFE *Memoirs of a Not Altogether Shy Pornographer* (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company, 1972), p. 43-44.





**BERNARD  
WOLFE**

[recalling his days  
as a student at Yale  
University]

New Haven. Say it  
again, New Haven.  
No haven. No haven  
at all. No haven first  
of all from New  
Haven...Every time I  
stepped on campus I  
felt I was in enemy  
territory.

■ **Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings** by Jonathan Lipman. Mineola NY: Dover Publications, 2003. 197 pp., 180 illustrations. Paperback, \$19.95. ISBN 0-486-42748-X. *Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens.*

NEARLY TWENTY years ago, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University organized a traveling exhibition that opened at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., and was afterwards installed, during the next two and a half years, at ten other major museums across the country. Titled "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings: Creating a Corporate Cathedral," the exhibition focused on the planning, design and construction of the two major components (the Administration Building completed in 1939, and the Research Tower in 1950) of the corporate headquarters of the Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin. To accompany the exhibition, a scholarly study was produced by Rizzoli, of which this newly published book is an unabridged reissue. Its author is the architectural historian who curated the original exhibition, and has since gone on to write other books about the architect, has presided over the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, and has served as an expert consultant for a number of Wright restorations. Born in 1953, only three years after the completion of the Johnson Research Tower, Jonathan Lipman has devoted much of his life to becoming an authority on Wright's creative process, and to preserving the structures that evidence that. Not surprisingly, this is a book of unusual detail, some of it fairly technical, and yet, because of the varied and interesting sequence of vintage photographs, architectural drawings, accounts by his apprentices and other eyewitnesses, the sometimes combative exchanges between architect and client, and all kinds of behind-the-scene sources, it really does read like a novel, while it also maintains the more serious tone of historical sleuthing. Of particular interest are Lipman's insightful comments about Wright's Prairie Style residential buildings (which were "extroverted and integrated with the landscape") as distinct from his public buildings, the Johnson Wax buildings among them, which were almost always closed off from their surroundings (being "introspective and virtually windowless"). As in any book about the colorful and then controversial architect, amusing anecdotes abound, such as the short-lived suggestion by the company's board of directors that the finished building should be identified by a neon sign. To which one of Wright's underlings answered: "When this building is finished it is going to be such a contribution that you won't need any sign. After all, there's no sign on the Washington Monument." In the end, Wright did add the company name to the building, but unobtrusively, and certainly *not* in neon. ✎

■ **Typography: Formation and Transformation** by Willi Kunz. Zurich, Switzerland: Verlag Niggli, 2003. 160 pp., illus. Hardbound, \$59.00. ISBN 3-7212-0495-6. Available in the U.S. from Willi Kunz Books, P.O. Box 282, Planetarium Station, New York NY 10024-0282. *Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens.*

THE AUTHOR of this book about "typographic process" is a prominent Swiss-born designer who has lived and worked in the U.S. for more than three decades. Educated at the Zurich Kunstgewerbeschule in Switzerland, he moved to New York in 1970, where he established his own design firm. He has also taught typography at the Basel School of Design (as a leave replacement for Wolfgang Weingart) and at Ohio State University. Until about six years ago, he was almost exclusively known, among designers, for the experimental work he did in the late 1970s, in particular, his typographic interpretations of the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, and exhibition posters for the photographs of Fredrich Cantor. He has revisited those works in his own books, but they also appear in design history surveys, acknowledging contributions he made to the transformation of Swiss Style typographic design into Postmodernism (coincident with efforts by Weingart, April Greiman, Dan Friedman and others). In 1998, he wrote and produced an excellent book titled *Typography: Macro and Microaesthetics: Fundamentals of Typographic Design*, which argued (by the use of persuasive examples) that the process of designing gains from the use of a double awareness, which he called macro- and microaesthetics, that designers should attend to both the overall layout of a project (*macro*) and its finer, more subtle refinements (*micro*). That basic idea (long-promoted by teachers of drawing and basic design) was not in itself astonishing, but the rigor with which he presented it was. This second volume is just as exacting as the first—maybe more so—and in title, size and page design, the two look very much alike. Once inside, however (switching to micro mode), it becomes evident that this is not a sequel to the first book, but a companion volume. It advocates the same construction principles, but does so with a different text and a new set of visual examples, with the result that either book can stand separately, or the two can work together as one extended overview. Among the author's conspicuous strengths is the ability to reduce things to a wonderfully elegant spareness, whether texts, or shapes, or page layouts. Ironically, this may also be one of the reasons why some teachers may be hesitant to use it as a classroom text: Unrelieved by juxtaposition with work in other styles, his examples seem too targeted, and, in style, too exclusive. If the concepts that he advocates are universal (and they certainly appear to be), perhaps he would be wise to discuss visual examples from a wider stylistic range, to feature a greater diversity of typefaces, or to use a geometric plan (or underlying grid structure) that is not always so explicit. ~

#### ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

A man should keep his little brain attic stocked with all the furniture that he is likely to use, and the rest he can put away in the lumber room of his library, where he can get it if he wants it.

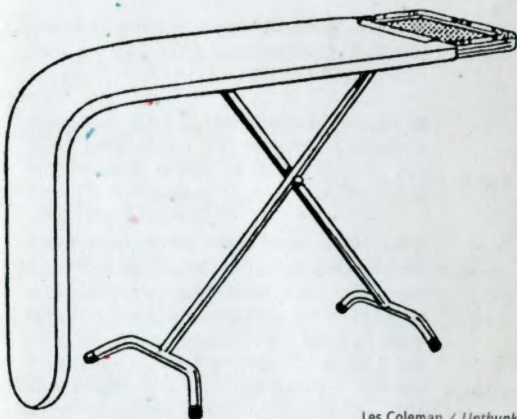
#### KEN DODD

Freud's theory was that when a joke opens a window...you get a marvelous feeling of relief and elation. The trouble with Freud is that he never had to play the old Glasgøw Empire on a Saturday night after the Rangers and the Celtics had both lost.

#### BILL BRYSON (*The Lost Continent: Travels in Small Town America*)

You can always tell a Midwestern couple in Europe because they will be standing in the middle of a busy intersection looking at a wind-blown map and arguing over which way is west. European cities, with their wandering streets and undisciplined alleys, drive Midwesterners practically insane.



Les Coleman / *Unthunk*

■ **Artful History: A Restoration Comedy** A film by Jason Simon and Mark Dion. 1988. VHS video. 30 minutes. Color. Available from First Run / Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st Floor, Brooklyn NY 11201. Website: <http://www.frif.com>. Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens.

THIS FILM is terribly funny, in the sense that it makes frequent use of a wonderfully dry sense of humor (it is replete with art historians' jokes), the first indication of which is the film's subtitle, "a restoration comedy." That phrase is typically used to refer to 17th century British stage plays, known for their double entendres, especially the comedies of William Congreve. This film has nothing to do with that meaning of "restoration comedy," but rather it is all about the tragic-comedy of how historic works of art become ruined while supposedly being "restored" by duplicitous art dealers. I suppose we shouldn't be surprised by any of this, since everyday we see (and likely also purchase) exquisite handmade plates removed by antique dealers from rare historic books, and then sold separately as prints. This film, which includes a confessional interview with a former art restorer, discusses the odious methods employed by dealers and restorers in making a buck from the leftovers of history. One common trick (with paintings) is to cut the original canvas in parts, thereby multiplying the inventory. In selling African art, it is not unknown to add on parts from a box of odds and ends, or to hack off those that do not fit stylistically. In one sequence, a British painting of a ship in the foreground and a second in the distance is divided into two smaller paintings: One of the detailed foreground ship, and the other a slightly impressionist view of a more distant vessel. This film was made almost fifteen years ago, but surely these problems have not been remedied, and, given the epidemic level of greed, one suspects that they have to have worsened. ➤

[THERE IS a Law of Laws] that says, it's not the paycheck you get that determines the value of the work you do, it's the inspired and organized energy you put into the project, the invention, inner direction, personal thrust; no matter what payroll you're on, the best payrolls are your own, the best jobs are free-lance. That says, the difference between those who do and those who get done to and [who get done] in is what's hungered for, the life on your feet or the life flat on your back. That says, there are the active ones, the makers; then there are the passive ones, the made. That says, work ethic be damned, what we're talking about is the nature and direction of hunger, whether your need is to stiff the world a little or be steamrollered.

#### JEAN COCTEAU

Art produces ugly things that frequently become beautiful with time. Fashion, on the other hand, produces beautiful things which always become ugly with time.

BERNARD WOLFE, *Memoirs of a Not Altogether Shy Pornographer* (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company, 1972), p. 157.



JAMES  
JOYCE

Antwerp I renamed  
Gnantwerp for I  
was devoured by  
mosquitoes.

BARRY  
HUMPHRIES

Australia is an out-  
door country. People  
only go inside to use  
the toilet. And that's  
only a recent devel-  
opment.

HARRISON  
SALISBURY

*(Growing Up  
in Minnesota)*

There was nothing  
good about  
Germans [after the  
U.S. entered World  
War I]...the teaching  
of this disgusting  
language [German]  
was banned in the  
Minneapolis schools  
in 1917...We no  
longer ate sauer-  
kraut at our house—  
it was Liberty  
cabbage—and when  
my sister and I got  
ill, it was with  
Liberty measles.

EVELYN  
WAUGH  
*(Diary 1930)*

We went to see the  
phallic giant at  
Cerne Abbas. Two  
little girls with long  
bare legs were sit-  
ting on his testicles.

■ **Advertising Outdoors** by David Bernstein.  
New York: Phaidon Press, 2004. 240 pp., illus.  
Paperback, \$39.95. ISBN 0-7148-4386-5.

■ **History of the Poster** by Josef and Shizuko  
Müller-Brockmann. New York: Phaidon Press, 2004.  
244 pp., illus. Paperback, \$39.95. ISBN 0-7148-  
4403-9. *Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens.*

THESE BOOKS are of related interest because both are historical surveys of the design of Modern posters. The first is concerned with "outdoor advertising," particularly billboards, the second with what might be called "indoor advertising," in the sense that it mostly addresses the design of wall posters. Less than a century ago, the two categories were often synonymous, in that giant posters hung (whether by posting or painting) on the sides of downtown buildings, frequently adjacent to railway stations. All that changed, to some extent, with the proliferation of automobiles, which took people out of the city, and dramatically increased the speed at which they traveled past a sign. As the viewing time for outdoor advertising was shortened, so differences arose between billboards (which had to be utterly simple and clear, with almost non-existent text) and posters (which had to attract the attention of pedestrian passersby, but might then be examined more closely and for longer times). It may be of some insight to think about billboards and posters in connection with corporate logos and television commercials, because all these forms entail an extraordinary economy of means (in Josef Müller-Brockmann's words, they strive for "maximum effect with minimum graphic means") while also imparting significance through some disarming graphic aspect. When a poster is effective, writes Müller-Brockmann, it is not unlike an ambush, or, as poster designer A.M. Cassandre put it, it is an "optical incident" that is "not like a gentleman going through the door with a painting on an easel, but like a burglar through the window with a crowbar in his hand." The volume by Müller-Brockmann is an unrevised new printing of an earlier, influential book about poster design by one of its most accomplished practitioners, a famous Swiss designer who died in 1996. Originally published in 1971, it includes reproductions of nearly 250 posters (144 in color), beginning with examples from the 1890s and ending in 1968. The book by David Bernstein is also a reprint, a paperback edition of a volume Phaidon first released in 1997, so the dates of its visual examples are far more recent and deliberately more inclusive. Bernstein begins with an overview of the emergence of outdoor advertising, then addresses in various chapters ("Poster Rules," "The Creative Challenge," "Brand and Consumer," and so on) the concerns that designers incessantly face. In the process, he introduces nearly 600 visual examples (550 in color), both historic and contemporary, but does it in a way that treats advertising, technology and environmental context with as much seriousness as is more commonly given to art. There is surprisingly little overlap of examples in the two books, and the texts are also quite distinct. In the end, perhaps the paramount value of both is the wealth of their range of examples. >

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#### BERNARD WOLFE

The man who greeted me had no part that was not alarmingly pendulant. All his tissues seemed to have been systematically displaced downward, as in a melt suddenly interrupted, given the queer impression that forehead was where nose should be, nose where lips, wrists where fingertips, and so on—a landslide of a man. His outstanding feature was his nose, I mean it stood out as though it was ready to leave home and had already taken the first step, yet what I remember most is the lips, they were really in love, constantly kissing and moving apart like a fish's.

#### WILLIAM MAXWELL

[George Bernard Shaw] is now in his ninety-fourth year and when he had a fall recently I wrote saying I hoped he had suffered no bad effects. His reply by postcard was characteristically brief. It ran to seven words only and said: "Which fall? I fall twice every day."

#### Credits

With the exception of the drawing by LES COLEMAN on page 13, the artworks in this issue (including the cover) are mixed media pieces by MARY SNYDER BEHRENS, from the American Canvas series (2002).

#### CARL SANDBURG

Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

#### GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

[Richard] Wagner has lovely moments but awful quarters of an hour.

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